REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. Claims 1-11, 13 and 14 are pending. By the present amendment, claims 1, 11, and 13 are amended.

Applicant appreciates the allowance of claim 13 if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claim 13 is amended to include all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 13 is allowable. Claim 14, which depends from claim 13, is allowable as depending from an allowable claim and also for the specific limitations recited therein.

Claims 1 and 11 are amended to recite that the gas bag is connected with the generator holder via the gas bag holding element by the at least one drive screw in such a manner that the gas bag cannot be detached from the gas bag module during inflation of the gas bag. Neither Sutherland et al. nor Seidl et al. nor Loudin et al. nor any other prior art reference taken either alone or in combination discloses or suggests a gas bag that is connected with a generator holder via a gas bag holding element by at least one drive screw in such a manner that the gas bag cannot be detached from the gas bag module during inflation of the gas bag.

Also, it would not be obvious to modify Sutherland in view of Seidl et al. and Loudin et al. to provide the invention claimed in claims 1 or 11. To establish a claim of obviousness, there must be some suggestion or motivation to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings (MPEP §706.02(j)). Further, if the proposed combination "would change the principle of operation of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the

references are not sufficient to render the claims prima facie obvious." (MPEP §2143.01).

There is no suggestion to modify Sutherland to connect a gas bag with a generator holder via a gas bag holding element using a drive screw in such a manner that the gas bag cannot be detached from the gas bag module during inflation of the gas bag.

The air bag 14 in Sutherland et al. has to remain firmly attached to the gas bag module to be able to provide protection for the vehicle occupant. The forces acting on the air bag during deployment and during the impact of the occupant on the air bag are very high. As the air bag expands abruptly, the plastic retainer 70 has to bear a very high load during deployment. The load carried by the air bag is introduced into the reaction plate 28 and, ultimately, into the vehicle via the screws 66 used to connect plastic retainer 70 with the reaction plate 28. A person of ordinary skilled in the art will, therefore, look for a fastener that will not fracture or come loose under an axially directed force. The fastener 20, as shown in Seidl et al., is used to attach the air bag cover 24 to the base portion 28 of the dashboard 22. Upon inflation of the air bag, the fastener fractures along frangible means 30 to allow the cover 24 to open and a hence, allow quick deployment of the air bag 14.

Thus, a person skilled in the art would not be motivated to modify Sutherland et al. to use the frangible fastener 20 of Seidl et al. to fasten the air bag of Sutherland et al. to the air bag module 16.

Loudin et al. gives a person of ordinary skilled in the art only the information that a drive pin 15 can be used for fastening processes. However, Loudin et al. does not disclose or suggest that the drive pin would be able to bear the load produced by

a deploying air bag. In fact, Loudin et al. does not even mention or suggest employing a drive screw in an air bag module. Therefore, there is no motivation or suggestion for a person of ordinary skilled in the art to modify Sutherland et al. to use the drive pin of Loudin et al.

Further, to modify the Sutherland et al. reference with the fastener 20 of Seidl et al. would affect the principle operation of Sutherland et al. As previously mentioned, Seidl et al. discloses frangible means 30 in the shank of the fastener 20 that will fracture when a predetermine force is applied to the means 30 in order to allow the air bag cover 24, which is fastened to the fastener 20, to open for deployment of the air bag. By contrast, the screw 66 of Sutherland et al. must not fracture so that the screw assembly 56 is firmly attached to the reaction plate 28, especially in the moment of deployment of the air bag, to secure the inflator 12 and air bag to the air bag module so that air bag can properly deploy.

Therefore, in view of the above mentioned reasons, claims 1 and 11 are allowable. Claims 2-10 depend directly or indirectly from claim 11 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

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